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MEMORANDUM

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Authority VND 979520
By 16 NAPA Date 10/2

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

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February 25, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: WINSTON LORD
FROM: W. R. SMYER
SUBJECT: China Paper by Moorstein and Abramowitz

At your suggestion I have gone over the China paper done by Dick Moorstein and Mort Abramowitz, and have the following report and comments:

General Points and Recommendations Made by the Paper:

-- We must look into a lot of China policy questions much more precisely than in the past.

-- We must start doing a lot of detailed studies about specific issues of China policy and about the effect of our policies on China and other countries in the area, particularly Japan.

-- We must have a new policy-level organization, preferably in the State Department but possibly in the NSC, which the paper calls a "China Group." This organization, with its own staff, should consider the China implications of a wide range of policies which bear on our relations with China but which are not elsewhere considered in this context. The paper states that this is its most important recommendation.

-- We must begin reviewing our policy toward China and must begin to pull together a number of highly diverse considerations which affect our policy toward Peking (such as the Sino-Soviet split, the CHIREP question, the Japanese factor) but which are not usually coordinated.

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-- Territorial Integrity. We should begin thinking our way through to a new position on this, nominally recognizing the "territorial integrity" of China including Taiwan but not favoring de facto reversion at present; we can always say that future movement hinges on Peking's future conduct. This would obviously create problems with Taipei, although the paper thinks these are manageable. After all, the paper points out (rather disingenuously), both Peking and Taipei claim to speak for one China. However, after posing this thought, the paper suggests that it is perhaps too early to tackle it now. It also points out at several places that we should keep Japan posted on what we are doing and thinking.

-- The Japanese Question. The paper indicates that the Japanese would be very concerned about any arrangement which threatened to turn Taiwan over to the mainland at an early date. It points out that this means the Taiwan problem will become more of a triangular than bilateral problem after a while, with less freedom of action for all parties.

-- Taiwan as a Base. The paper opposes developing Taiwan as a vital military base, since it would mean that our general military posture in the Pacific would then be at stake in any accommodation with Peking on the Taiwan issue. However, at another point in the paper the authors say that making Taiwan militarily independent would contribute to stability (since our departure would be less traumatic).

-- CHIREP. The paper says it is pointless to believe we can move toward a two-China policy in the U. N. since neither Peking nor Taipei would accept it. The paper says that we should fight hard for the GRC to show that our heart is in the right place, but that we must recognize that at the end the U. N. will accept Peking even at the price of kicking out Taipei. Therefore, the paper says we should not commit too much prestige or public emotion on this issue since we are bound to lose. However, the paper "proposes no details" because our position should be closely coordinated with the GRC.

-- Nonproliferation. The paper proposes that we be prepared to spell out our views on non-proliferation to Peking, so that they will know our thinking even if they do not agree. This will also make them aware of the risk to themselves of delaying too long on this issue because

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the Japanese will start going nuclear also.

-- Southeast Asia. The paper says that we cannot directly reach an accommodation with Peking on Southeast Asia, so we should look around for other things to talk about. But we should, it says, begin suggesting to such Southeast Asian nations as Thailand and Burma that they should start improving their relations with Peking. We should of course also tell Peking we favor an improvement in its relations with these countries.

-- The Sino-Soviet Dispute. The paper says that we should not be so glib about assuming that Peking and Moscow cannot improve relations. But it also says we are "exceedingly ill-equipped to plan or even think with much depth about how best to handle this fearsome triangular relationship," and suggests that this will continue for some time. In the meantime, the paper has little to recommend, although it suggests that Peking's fear of Moscow may be the principal factor motivating the Chinese to approach us.

-- Broad Approach. The paper thinks we should begin painting for Peking a more precise picture of our attitude on the various issues between us, and that we should begin soon. This can be carefully hedged, though we should be prepared to explore several subjects more or less concurrently. We can hope that we will get back some clearer notion than we now have of Peking's attitudes. We should also recognize that Peking may be reluctant to deal in quid pro quo terms. Our openers should be small but should deal with real issues.

My Comments

-- The paper has some overlap with the positions taken in NSSM 106, particularly with its proposals for (1) avoiding greater military commitment to Taiwan (where NSSM 106 says we should reduce our presence); (2) venturing into arms limitation discussions; and (3) attempting to get away from total commitment to the GRC as the Government of China (here, again, NSSM 106 has a somewhat different approach).

-- However, the paper has the virtue of going into a lot more subjects than NSSM 106. It also avoids the kinds of things which we have too often defined as steps to improve relations (such as relaxing travel restrictions) but which Peking does not really consider central to our relations. Curiously, it does not get into the trade issue, which may be an important issue.

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-- What is most unfortunate about the paper is its lack of specificity on policy questions. When it approaches a number of difficult issues it tends to slide into generalizations or into study proposals rather than attempting to cut into the issues. It does not do this all the time but enough to lose a lot of its value.

-- Moreover, like so many U.S. papers on negotiations, it focuses extensively on what we should do without deriving meaningful ideas or standards on what we can or should expect. The paper's assertion that we should not act on the basis of reciprocity misses a key point: that a change in our relationship with Peking is important, but that the terms of the new relationship are also important. We cannot think rapidly about something which Peking will probably consider very finely.

Recommendations

I am not an expert on China or on U.S. relations with China, so I cannot make any very intelligent recommendations. In fact, I have not read NSSM 106, but only seen Herb Levin's memo on it. But I have a few thoughts:

-- It would be useful for you to pass the Moorstein-Abramowitz paper to Henry so that he can see what kind of proposals other China experts develop.

-- But he should also know that I believe we are still very far from specific policy recommendations in this field. If we were to talk to the Chinese tomorrow, nothing in any of these papers would give us firm talking points.

-- As for the suggestion for a "China Group" at State, I am not sure it would really do much good. If the situation on China policy is as bad as it is often described we might want to try such an option. What worries me is that I am not sure State can handle it.

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